

KARO-ECHO Meeting

8 April 2019

Arlington Clubhouse

Present

Name	Call sign
Edward Carney	KM6UBY
Natalie DeJarlais	KM6UCF
Jay Fenton	KJ6WSS
Karen Leong Fenton	KK6ZPM
Zenon Fortuna	AC6ZF
Marian Gade	KC6OBK
Howdy Goudey	KE6BEE
Kevin Janes	ECFD
Annette McCoubrey	KJ6SWK
Jerry Michaelis	K6KOP
Robin Mitchell	N/A
Larry Nagle	N/A
David Naisuler	N/A
Diane Richwine	KK6RED
Dave Roth	KM6TCB
Don Simon	NI6A
Jamuel Starkey	KM6HBO
David Swanson	KJ6AAT
Larry Vanselow	KK6GIO

Approval of March 2019 minutes

Karen moved to approve the March minutes; Larry seconded and approval was unanimous.

Introduction of new attendees

Annette, a Kensington resident who was part of the old KARO-ECHO

David, a Richmond resident who will take the upcoming Benicia hamcram

Robert, who attended last time; no call sign yet

General announcements

Don confirmed that everyone received the newsletter

Don distributed copies of the Kensington Outlook, where the SET was reviewed and photos published. This is the best publicity that KARO-ECHO HAS had.

Treasurer Larry reported that the club is finally in the black and that people have been reimbursed for their out-of-pocket expenses. We'll need to file the 990 EZ (\$40) with the IRS. There is no movement yet on grant applications.

Kevin reported that all is well at the fire department and status quo re: communications.

CERT | Lack of Communication Plan and Local Emergency Coordinator

Don reported on the April Executive Board Meeting, which primarily consisted of seeking clarity on CERT situation, given that there is no CERT communication plan. We hope to improve our interactions with CERT representatives.

We have equipment at the Tassajara and Harding clubhouses, but we won't have access to those facilities during a disaster. It's possible to have a weatherproof box with an antenna connection, or we could turn that equipment into go kits. We don't yet know whether we can fund go kits with good antennas. Ideally, we would have batteries installed in the permanent installations and 24-hour access.

Chris Jones of the Parks & Recreation department is the person we've spoken with about this situation. Karen asked who paid for the equipment in the first place, and

Don explained that nobody knows the full history of the equipment. Kensington paid for some of the 733 radios, and El Cerrito paid for some of the Kenwood 741s. They were \$500-\$600 at the time. Antennas were ~\$300. It was quite an investment back then.

Marian explained the history of the club: the three principals were Ken Horn, Ivan Sturman (both WWII vets), and Kip Meader. Marian and Jerry got involved in the mid-90s or so. At the time there was NEAT (not CERT) and at that time, it was clear that KARO-ECHO was to serve NEAT. There was a joint safety committee between the fire and police departments, but it died for lack of interest. There was always an alliance with fire department, but it was weak. Local agencies had little structure to rely on, so not much happened.

Walnut Creek, Martinez, and Lamorinda have good CERT groups that coordinate with each

other, but our local CERT group is weak in this regard. We have a good relationship with the fire department, but that's it. Don thinks there's room now for a CERT communications module and would like to hand out a GMRS/FRS sheet at the training. The CERT rep approved this and agreed to dedicate a half-meeting (CERT) to training.

Don will try to pick up the ball with Chief Grupalo. Grupalo said he'd love to have a full-time director of emergency services, but there are no funds. Don feels we should push El Cerrito and Kensington hard to fund this role. There is precedence for this in Lamorinda and Walnut Creek.

Marian pointed out that the CERT teams were designed for small neighborhood work and explained the importance of communications in an emergency – that neighborhood individuals will need to get information out, and that will happen via radio. This is missing from CERT.

Robin suggested attending El Cerrito City Council meetings to stress the importance of having an emergency coordinator. There is a public comment period at the beginning of city council meetings during which members of the public can speak for three minutes on issues of importance.

Fourth of July Handout

Robin is not sure whether she'll be able to work on this, but we will have a venue to distribute the handout.

Local Mailing Proposal

Karen provided a proposed postcard that includes information about the nets and contact info for KARO-ECHO. Cost is ~50 cents each for 128 postcards. Target audience: postcard would go to licensed hams, removing those who are active in the clubs. Edward created a mailing list without email addresses and phone numbers. We need about \$45 for postage. Goal: more people on the net.

Annette pointed out that the current text isn't inviting to people. We need to mention the meeting dates and times, as well as the newsletter. Marian noted that the postcard tries to get people on the net and remembered that in the past, they asked whether people were interested in being engaged, but there was no followup. She would like us to mention a drill

or event in the mailing, presenting a concrete action. Marian wants to make clear that this is a new day and that we're making connections with the CERT teams; that it's not just another meeting to attend.

Don is interested in doing a more substantial mailing, using envelopes he already has. He wants to let people know that the club has been reorganized and has a new face, and to get the old hams on board to be active.

There was some discussion of what the goals of each mailing would be, and whether to do both mailings or just one. Robin pointed out that determining the purpose of each mailing would help us figure out whether to do both, and suggested forming a committee to determine what content should be on the postcard and coordinate with the larger mailing, though Don felt that the discussion during the meeting was sufficient.

Kevin is willing to look into funding a mailing once there's an estimate of costs. We need to explain the plan for the information – the goals and follow through.

Don mentioned that the website, under workstreams, has a list of what KE has done in the last two years. Howdy put forward an idea to have a group meet at a clubhouse (Harding Clubhouse) for people who are not familiar with checking in to observe the Thursday net..

Other updates

The HamCram is being delayed until the summer.

Don reported that a video is in the works to be posted on YouTube, based on audio and photos from the February 23 SET.

Howdy reported that Jamuel has given him the X500 parts to try out. The Kenwoods Howdy fixed from the senior center and Tassajara are working fine. We need to determine whether they'll be placed in a go cart or installed elsewhere. Jerry reported that the Kensington clubhouse radio will be returned to that building after the seismic upgrade is complete. Jerry gave Hal's contact information for a Kensington Outlook blurb, but nothing has been published yet.

Ken Fowler's technician class is happening at the Arlington clubhouse on Wednesday evenings; it began last week and will last ten weeks. Enrollment is still open

Congratulations was extended to Howdy who last week upgraded to general class..

Field day will be held the weekend of June 29-30 at Cesar Chavez park in Berkeley. They're

going to use solar power with batteries. They often use generators, which are noisy.

Presentations and Training

Go Kart

Don, NI6A, showed the KARO-ECHO Go-Kart on wheels, equipped with a 50 watt Kenwood dual-band radio, a 105 amp hour AGM battery fused at 30 amps, Anderson power plugs and cables, coax, heavy duty tripod, portable gain antenna, station manual (designed by K6RJM), switched built in voltmeter, cigarette lighter plug, and a GMRS radio with a GMRS portable gain antenna, all incorporated into one self-sufficient portable message center/communications center that is capable of solar power regeneration.

Lead Acid Battery Maintenance

David, KJ6AAT, presented on the use and requisition of reconditioned and used batteries. These batteries have good storage life and capacity, but are heavy.

It is important to store them in a plastic box in case of leakage, and to be locked in vented cabinets due to hydrogen gas offgassing. There is a fire hazard if they are not vented.

You can test the batteries with a volt meter. Below 11.5 volts spells trouble.

A hydrometer can be used to test cells – look at the floating balls. If one cell goes out, they all go.

Date and log your testing. Keep log sheet in plastic bag as well as in another location.

Only used distilled water in the cells when more is needed.

Sulfuric acid corrodes material, so it's good to wear old clothing. It can also blind you, so caution is required. Baking soda is good if you spill sulfuric acid on your skin.

There are two ways to charge the batteries. Trickle chargers keep charging your battery and can dry it out. Better to use a charger that stops charging when charge is full. It will be more expensive, but it's preferable to keep the battery plugged in and charged.

Use a wire brush and water to clean corrosion, which can be hard to see. Vaseline is a good, thin lubricant.

It's helpful to have a head lamp or flashlight. Knee pads are good.

It's worthwhile to bolt the battery inside the cabinet so it doesn't tip during an earthquake.

It's good to use batteries every few months so that they discharge a bit and then recharge, and to check them every 4-6 months.

Lead acid batteries run about \$125-\$150.

Deep cycle marine batteries are what Marian has worked with.

Sealed lead acid batteries are better, though twice as expensive.

Lithium ion is great, but super expensive.

AGM technology is not as good as lithium, but is a better technology. The advantage is that you can charge them without leaking hydrogen chloride in the environment.

Don't throw away old batteries because you turn them back in when you buy a new one.

SET Frequency Assignments

Howdy, KE6BEE, showed his net control process for handling priority and emergency traffic on multiple frequencies simultaneously. Howdy showed the board with listed frequencies and post-its for each person who had checked in. It was simple and effective, though it could be damaged in a wet environment. Alternatives were discussed. Don mentioned that net control should ideally be in a quiet area. He also pointed out the need for additional net control volunteers.

Net Check-In

Howdy proposed using a clubhouse for people to gather for a net, including unlicensed people so they can see how it works. Several people mentioned that they've heard that people would like to observe how net check-ins are done. They plan to implement this with Ken Fowler's Wednesday class.

The meeting was adjourned at 2110

Submitted, KM6UCF 04-15-2019